

Every Breath You Take by [thegirlwiththebigdreams](#)

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Drama, Suspense

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-11-06 00:00:37

Updated: 2017-11-06 00:00:37

Packaged: 2019-12-17 04:43:43

Rating: K+

Chapters: 3

Words: 4,261

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Could she still be out there? Could she still be out there, somewhere, waiting for him to find her like he'd done the last time? Mike had so many questions, though the only person who could answer them was the very person who was causing all of his confusion. A small glimpse into the inner thoughts and struggles of the cutest lil stranger things couple.

1. Chapter 1

Chapter One: Mike

Mike squeezed his eyes shut as he sat on his bed. Sometimes, when he squeezed hard enough, he was able to see her. It was one of the only ways that he could stay sane. Every once in a while, he would be able to see her face in passing, as though she was really there. It would happen when he would least expect it, like when the bad people had come to his house to ask questions about her. He'd pictured her eyes staring at him through his window as though things were back to normal and she was waiting for the heads up so that she could sneak down into the basement again. Home.

Mike swallowed hard. Home seemed like a strange term now, considering it hadn't felt comforting since she'd been gone. Everything felt different. He couldn't go down into the basement with his friends without thinking of her. Dustin and Lucas did their best not to mention El, and Mike knew they were being sensitive to his feelings, but it was impossible not to think about her. His life had quickly gone from being completely normal to being absolutely insane, but he couldn't bring it in himself to enjoy the fact that everything was fine. He couldn't bring himself to rejoice in the fact that he was able to return to his normal life, because it meant that she wouldn't be there.

It wasn't that he had planned on liking her. None of them had talked to a girl so much before her, so the initial awe of her being a female had gone to his head. At first. After that, it was hard to explain. Mike saw things in Eleven that Lucas and Dustin just didn't see. They could all marvel in the fact that she had abilities, there was no doubt about that or how cool it was. But while Lucas saw a weirdo and Dustin was just confused about it all, Mike had found her...charming. Her innocent understanding of the world was lovable. The way her face lit up when they were staring at each other was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen, and the way she seemed to be so very loyal and protective of him was...well, it was awesome.

And the kiss. Mike squeezed his eyes shut and could still remember how he had seen colors bursting behind his eye lids when he'd kissed

her. It was so short and literally out of nowhere, because he had no idea what the hell he was doing, but it seemed fitting. Eleven had been shocked, but in a pleased way, for the little inhale of breath and the slight smile awoke something inside of Mike that knew he had made the right decision. And it made him want to continue to make the right decision, over and over again until she couldn't stop smiling.

He opened his eyes and threw his head back against the wall. His room seemed haunted. He was constantly reminded of the fact that she had sacrificed herself for all of them. But there was a small part of him, the part of him that made him use the radio every single night, that felt her presence even a year later. He clung to the idea that Eleven could be out there somewhere, no matter what form she was in. He didn't really know how her powers worked. Did they kill her? Did they send her into the upside down? Did they cause her to simply be released into the radio waves or something?

He sighed, and found himself standing from his bed and exiting his room. There was only one place that he could do it and feel at least a little bit hopeful, though, and it was the same place that he knew he should avoid going at all costs.

The little fort was still intact. Mike hadn't had the heart to tear it down, and he had convinced his parents that it was simply something he and his friends had built and wanted to preserve. Really, though, it served as both a happy place and a sad reminder.

He picked up the hand-held radio and sighed deeply. He had been calling her for almost a year, and had never received a reply, but tonight he felt the need to just talk. He didn't require a response to feel better about the situation.

The sound of static broke through the silence of the basement, and he swallowed before pressing the button and saying, "El?"

2. Chapter 2

Chapter Two: Eleven

Eleven felt something inside of her snap. It had taken everything in her not to answer Mike. His voice was so helpless, and she had been allowing herself to see him if only with her mind. She listened to him call her name every night. Every night for over three hundred days. She'd heard him talk about Will, a boy she'd only gotten to know through stories. She'd heard him talk about school and how weird everything was there knowing she wouldn't be at the house when he got home. She listened to every single word, every story, every complaint, and never grew tired of his voice. She sighed blissfully every night when he first called out to her, and she would slip into that in between consciousness where she would be able to see him.

That particular night, she was able to see him inside of the little fort she'd lived in. He was sitting down inside of it casually, his arm propped up on a raised knee as he fumbled with the buttons of the small radio. Eleven sighed, memorizing every detail about the scene. Mike had been her first friend...ever. The first person she could remember truly showing her kindness. He had taught her so much, both purposefully and subconsciously.

Mike Wheeler was one of those people who seemed to naturally bring people together. Eleven had always been able to see that, because he'd done so with her and the group. Dustin, Lucas, and Mike all had very distinct personalities (as did Will, from what she could gather), but Mike was the one that made all of their differences make sense. He was the one who was constantly reassuring, constantly thinking ahead. Dustin seemed, to her, to be the more creative and naïve one, while Lucas seemed to always be devil's advocate. But there was just something about Mike that made him her favorite. He had a way about him that seemed so genuine and caring, and El had assumed that everyone was brought in by that charm.

However, there were also several things that made her believe that the way she viewed him wasn't at all like everyone else. The way she viewed him, and the way he viewed her, was special. She didn't know much about what it meant to be a friend, but she knew she didn't feel

the same thing around Dustin and Lucas that she felt around Mike.

As she watched him secretly, calling to her from inside of the fort, she could remember the last time she'd been alone with him.

"...you see, I was thinking, once all of this is over and Will's back and you're not a secret anymore, my parents can get you an actual bed for the basement. Or you can take my room if you want, since I'm down there all the time anyways. My point is, they'll take care of you. They'll be like your new parents, and Nancy, she'll be like your new sister," he'd explained sweetly, as if the world wasn't crashing down around them.

Eleven had smiled innocently, "Will you be like my brother?"

"What? No, no," Mike said immediately.

"Why no?"

"Because," he'd said awkwardly, trying to find the words. Eleven watched his face in wonder, ready to hear any and everything he wanted to teach her. He continued, "...cause it's different."

She'd blinked, "Why?"

Mike sighed, his face falling in a defeated manner, "I mean, I don't know, I guess it's not. It's stupid."

Eleven persisted in her investigation of his thoughts. She didn't know why she felt what she did, and she needed Mike to explain the feeling so that she could understand it. Things made sense with him, "Mike?"

"Yeah?"

She'd stared at him seriously, "Friends don't lie."

He couldn't deny her that, and she was inwardly pleased as he continued, "Well...I was thinking...I don't know...maybe we can go to the Snow Ball together."

She'd felt her brows knit, "Snow Ball?"

"It's this cheesy school dance where you go in the gym and dance to music

and stuff. I've never been but I know you're not supposed to go with your sister," he said, his face very serious.

She still didn't understand, "No?"

He sighed again, "I mean, I guess you can, but it'd be really weird. You go to school dances with someone that, you know...someone that you like."

Eleven swallowed, trying her best to follow. Was he purposefully keeping her in the dark about what the feeling in her chest meant? Or did he truly not know how to navigate it either? It was so difficult to tell. He was tripping up on his words in a way that he hadn't usually done, so she convinced herself that whatever was happening between them was new, "A friend?"

"Not a friend, uh- uh...someone like a..." his voice faded out as his eyes had met her face. She felt something like a mixture of panic and wonder shoot through her as his dark eyes suddenly grew very serious and vulnerable.

She felt her breath hitch in her throat as he leaned forward and touched his lips to hers. Eleven froze, thinking about what it meant, thinking about how it finally felt like it was right. Whatever she felt, whatever she wanted, was perfectly summarized by the simple lip to lip contact, and she had never felt anything more incredible.

*As she stared down at Mike in the in-between, his expression pained and his lips parted, the kiss was all she could think about. It was all she had been thinking about. She never thought about things like that with Dustin or Lucas, and she'd always known Mike was special. She wanted to reach out to him, help him, comfort him. She wanted to be a good...not sister, not friend, but someone that Mike *liked*, whatever that term was.*

"El, are you there? El?" he said desperately, "It's me. It's Mike. It's day 352, 7:40 pm. I'm still here..."

Eleven felt her chest grow tight and her stomach lurch. He was still there. She wanted to be there, too. She was going to get to him no matter how long it took.

3. Chapter 3

Chapter Three: Mike

He felt completely weightless, and he initially didn't know what to make of it. It seemed surreal. His immediate impression of the situation was that he had hit the water and died. He thought he was dead. He'd jumped with every intention of hitting the water, the very water that was said to feel like cement from that high up. He'd done it for Dustin, so when he felt his body freeze mid-air and began to float back toward the top, he was dumfounded. He felt weightless, but suddenly everything was clear. He wasn't dead at all. A warm sense of understanding passed through him as his feet hit the ground once again. It had to be her.

He laid on the ground, turning his head slightly to the left so that he could see her approaching. However, she didn't look the same. Her hair was longer, shaggier. It was curly and dark and unkept. She was wearing a pair of worn denim overalls, a gray shirt, and a thick flannel. She looked older, too, and Mike found his brows knitting as he stared at her. Something was different. Something was off.

She didn't look like she had the day that she'd truly saved him from jumping into the water. Her expression was pained, her eyes full of sadness, and her lips parted in desperation as she sadly whispered, "Mike."

Mike sat straight up in his bed that morning, covered in a thin layer of sweat. He dreamed about her all the time, it was starting to mess with his grasp of reality. Last time he had seen her, she'd had a shaved head, the pink dress and tennis shoes, and a crazy look in her eyes. Nothing at all like the Eleven he had seen in his dream. Where did his mind come up with this image of her?

He exhaled loudly and tried to push her from his mind. She was gone, and it was the greatest night of the year: Halloween.

The entire day was a disaster, because unlike the previous year, nobody had shown up to school in a costume except them. And it wasn't like they were wearing a simple t-shirt or hat or even face paint that they could easily wash off in the bathroom; they were fully

clothed, head to toe, in the ghostbusters jumpsuits. The ensemble was complete with equipment and name tags, though even that was managed to be ruined by the fact that Lucas had tried to say Mike wasn't Venkman. It was a disaster to say the least.

And that night, well, that night Mike had managed to lay low with the guys. He was trying to shake off the vision of Eleven he'd seen in his dream, because he was all too aware of what it felt like to get his hopes up only to be knocked down to size. It was too painful, and he didn't want to ruin the day even more. Plus, it wasn't anything he hadn't already told them a thousand times. 'I think she's still out there'. 'I had a dream about her last night'. He was like a broken record, though he couldn't bring himself to give up on it. He wasn't tired of the sound of his own repetitive nature yet.

They walked through the neighborhood that night, still in the costumes, and all seemed relatively normal for the time being. Not that anything really felt normal since Will had been back. Or since Eleven had been gone. But they were all there, the entire party, back together. Lucas, Dustin, Will, and Mike, walking along the sides of the streets, hearing random voices shouting rude comments to them. Mike sighed, though couldn't pretend that there wasn't some sense of comfort in the fact that they were all enduring it together.

Lucas sighed randomly, shaking his head and rolling his eyes as he said, "If I get another 3 Musketeers, I'm gonna kill myself."

Mike paid little attention to the comment, though instantly became more entertained when Dustin's voice broke through and asked, offended, "What's wrong with 3 Musketeers?"

Lucas scoffed, "What's wrong with 3 Musketeers?"

"No one likes 3 Musketeers!" Mike added helpfully, causing Dustin's lips to part in exasperation.

"Yeah, it's just nougat," Will added calmly.

"Whoa, 'just nougat'? Just nougat? It is top three for me," Dustin said firmly as the four of them walked across the yard of some random woman who had called them exterminators. As if any kid wanted to

ever, *ever* be an exterminator.

Lucas raised his brows in disbelief, "Top three?"

Mike sighed, then, suddenly annoyed by the pointlessness of the conversation. Halloween was meant to amount to more than just discussing Dustin's preference of horrible candies, especially if it was meant to take his mind off of the dream, "Oh, God. Give me a break."

Dustin wasn't finished, though, "Seriously, I can just eat a whole bowl of nougat. Straight up-

Then out from the bushes, a masked figure appeared and screamed at them. Mike felt a shot of fear and adrenaline shoot through his body, and his first instinct was to drop the candy and run. Well, maybe not first. First instinct was to scream, which they all did, especially Lucas.

But it was quickly revealed, with the simple discarding of the Michael Myers mask, that the attacker was none other than Mad Max, the annoying girl the other guys were obsessed with. Mike rolled his eyes as soon as he caught his breath. Max was an intruder to the core. All she represented in Mike's mind was a threat to the peace that they had recently reestablished. He would be damned if he let another girl into the group after the way he'd felt about the last female friend he had had. Well, *friend* was a relative term. And as he stared at Max's smug smile and cheap mask flailing in her hand, along with a fake knife, all he could think about was the fact that Eleven would have hated her.

The red head laughed loudly, "Holy shit! You should have seen the look on your faces. And you? Who screams like that? You sound like a little girl."

The four of them exchanged nervous glances. Will was in no position to be scared, and Mike knew that. Dustin and Lucas, well, they were never considered to be tough people. And Mike could admit that Lucas had sounded exactly like a little girl.

Mad began to walk away, though threw her long red hair over her shoulder and called, "Hey, you guys coming or not? Oh, I heard we should hit up Loch Nora. That's where the rich people live, right?"

Mike started to refuse, but the unanimously squeal that released itself from the other three boys (primarily Dustin and Lucas) caused him to groan. He followed along reluctantly.

He sulked as Dustin, Lucas, and Max walked ahead. Since when did his best friends use words like 'tubular'? Even if they were just impersonating someone from California? He quickly decided he hated Max. He hated that she made his friends so...different.

Will was beside him, laughing. He was carrying a huge camera that belonged to Bob, his mom's new boyfriend. Mike sighed, glancing over at the shorter boy, ignoring the camera as he asked, "Did you agree to this?"

"What?" Will asked, lowering the lens so he could see Mike's face.

Mike knew he looked pissed, and he wasn't trying to hide his displeasure in the situation, "To her joining our party."

Will shrugged nonchalantly, "It's just for Halloween."

"You should have checked with me," Mike said, obviously annoyed.

Eleven was still there every time he closed his eyes. It was so difficult to get past, and it was a constant thing. He hadn't known just how much more alive he felt around her. He hadn't realized that things before her were boring, or that things after her would be nothing short of unbearable. She ruined him, and he prayed to God that she was alive somewhere so that she could ruin him again and again if necessary. He would take a lifetime of danger with El if it meant that it was, in fact, with El. And the guys were just mocking his pain by letting someone else in, as if Eleven had meant nothing, as if her presence was replaceable.

"Well, they were excited," Will said softly, matter-of-factly. He always had a way of making things sound less serious, even after everything that had happened, "I guess I thought you'd be okay with it."

Mike found himself stomping then, "She's ruining the best night of the year."

He stalked off, then, leaving Will in front of the huge house in Loch Nora. Mike sighed, figuring he might as well get some good, expensive candy if he was going to endure the presence of someone as insufferable as Mad Max. Without his own consent, no less.

He stepped up to the porch of the house after Dustin, Lucas, and Max, and waited as the kids in front of them received their candy. He could hear the murmurings of the three in front of him, and was angered further to find that they were talking about him.

Max asked, "Hey, is your friend alright? He hasn't said one word to me tonight. He afraid of girls or something?"

Dustin shrugged awkwardly and Lucas shook his head, "Uh, well, no, it's just...it's a long story."

Before Max could continue to ask questions (that Mike believed she had no business asking), it was their turn for candy. They were greeted by a larger, older woman who was wearing a simple black witch hat and a t-shirt. Mike held out his bag unenthusiastically. The plump woman on the other side of the threshold grabbed a handful of chocolate, Will's favorite chocolate, and placed it in Mike's bag without question. He smiled and turned over his shoulder, finding delight in his friend's undoubted excitement at the situation. However, when he turned to Will, Will wasn't there. He wasn't anywhere.

"Will?" Mike called out. A few kids who had gathered behind him looked up, none of them were Will Byers. Mike swallowed.

He turned to his friends, "Have you guys seen Will?"

Dustin shrugged, "He was with you."

Mike felt his chest tighten. He glanced out at the front yard, Will was nowhere in sight. *Oh no*. His breathing picked up. His eyes began to bulge. He suddenly felt like he had a very firm knot in the back of his throat. Not good not good not good.

And he hated himself, because all he could think about was the fact that Eleven would know exactly what to do.

He half ran down the steps leading up to the front door, and rushed to the driveway. He'd last seen Will at the entrance of the drive way. However, the fourth ghost buster wasn't standing there, either. Shit.

However, all was well moments later, because he found Will huddled against the small brick barrier that surrounded the back yard of the house. He was scrunched up, like a child playing hide and seek. He was shaking, his eyes distant. Mike breathed an outward sigh of relief and yelled, "Will!"

Mike stalked down into the basement of his home that night, completely defeated. Will had been scared. No, Will had been terrified, and there was nothing Mike could do to help him. He knew nothing about what it felt like to be Will Byers, to be the boy who had successfully come back from the Upside Down, seemingly fine. Seemingly.

He walked up to the small fort and felt something in his head click, then. He felt strangely comforted whenever he was in close proximity with something that had, for a time, been considered hers. He felt the need to talk to her after the night he had had. He always felt the need to talk to her. And, as always, he had trained himself to not need a response to feel better, so simply sitting in the fort brought a sense of peace. He lifted the radio, too, and placed it close to his lips as he spoke.

"It's day 353," he said, sighing loudly, "I had a bad day today. I don't know, I...I guess I wish you were here. I mean, we all do."

Nothing. He continued to listen to the static in between the times when he would press the button to talk. He continued, "If you're out there, just please give me a sign."

He waited for a moment, though heard nothing. However, after a few seconds of nothing, he thought he saw something. He could picture her, the Eleven from his dream the previous night, wearing her flannel, sporting the shaggy hair. She was right in front of him, clear as day, as though he wasn't imagining her out of pure need. His lips began to tingle at the sight of her, and he allowed them to part. He so badly wished that she was there. He looked up at the hallucination,

staring straight into her big, beautiful eyes as though she was capable of reading them. But she wasn't real, and it frustrated him to no end. His nostrils began to flare, and he felt his grasp of reality slipping as he swore he heard her voice whispering, "Mike."

He blinked, and pressed the button on the radio, "Eleven?"

He felt a rush of cool air hit his face, and he imagined that she was extending her hair toward his face. It was the purest thing he could have thought of, the simple raise of her hand. He couldn't believe it wasn't real. It seemed too real, as had the El from his dream.

But it wasn't real. He released a quick sigh, defeatedly slamming the antenna down and turning off the radio. She wasn't real.